

Message Text

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41

ACTION SS-25

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R 240718Z SEP 75
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 333

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 2724

EXDIS

FOR SNM, AMBASSADOR VANCE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR BM
SUBJ: BURMESE PROPOSE FORMULA FOR DEA RELATIONSHIP

1. ON RETURN FROM HOME LEAVE, I ASKED FOR APPOINTMENT WITH COLONEL TIN OO TO GET FROM HIM AN AUTHORITATIVE UPDATING ON STATE OF GUB ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT. APPOINTMENT CAME THROUGH PROMPTLY, AND MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 23 HAS BEEN REPORTED SEPTEL. IN COURSE OF DISCUSSION, TIN OO TOUCHED ON THE GUB'S NEED FOR MORE RELIABLE COORDINATION WITH AND INFORMATION ABOUT ANTI-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS ON THAI SIDE OF BORDER. THIS PROVIDED ME AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO REMIND TIN OO AGAIN OF THE UNITED STATES' STRONG INTEREST, EXPRESSED BY YOU TO HIM LAST MARCH, IN A DEA PRESENCE IN BURMA. WITH DEA'S EXTENSIVE CONNECTIONS IN THE THAI APPARATUS AND EXPERIENCE IN WORKING WITH THE THAI ON NARCOTICS MATTERS, I POINTED OUT. DEA MIGHT PROVIDE JUST THE KIND OF EXPERTISE THE GUB NEEDED, IN ADDITION TO OTHER BENEFITS WHICH WE HAD DISCUSSED PREVIOUSLY.

2. COLONEL TIN OO WAS OBVIOUSLY INTERESTED. HE SAID THAT THE MATTER OF DEA REPRESENTATION IN RANGOON HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AT THE CABINET LEVEL, IN THE WAKE OF AMBASSADOR VANCE'S VISIT LAST MARCH, AND THE POLICY POSITION THAT EMERGED WAS FIRMLY AGAINST THE STATIONING OF A DEA REPRESENTATIVE IN RANGOON. HOWEVER, TIN OO SIAD, THERE MIGHT BE A WAY OF OVERCOMING THIS POLICY PROBLEM. HE SUGGESTED THAT ONE OF THE DEA REPRESENTATIVES STATIONED IN THAILAND BE SENT TO RANGOON PERIODICALLY FOR CONSULTATIONS. TIN OO
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SAID HE COULD GUARANTEE THAT SUCH A DEA MAN, UNDER THIS EMBASSY'S

AUSPICES, WOULD BE ABLE TO MEET OFFICIALS OF APPROPRIATELY HIGH LEVEL IN THE GUB ANTI-NARCOTICS AND MILITARY COMMAND STRUCTURE.

3. I TOLD TIN OO THAT I THOUGHT HIS SUGGESTION HAD OBVIOUS MERIT, AND I WOULD REPORT IT TO WASHINGTON. HOWEVER, I HAD NO WAY OF TELLING IN ADVANCE WHETHER THE ARRANGEMENT HE WAS SUGGESTING WOULD BE ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY FROM OUR STANDPOINT. TIN OO SAID HE UNDERSTOOD, BUT THIS WAS THE BEST ARRANGEMENT HE COULD OFFER AT THIS TIME.

4. COMMENT: I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT WE TAKE COLONEL TIN OO UP ON HIS SUGGESTION, AND THAT WE ACT PROMPTLY. TIN OO'S EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING A REGULAR THOUGH INFORMAL WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH DEA REPRESENTATIVE FROM BANGKOK WAS OBVIOUSLY SINCERE, AND OFFERS US OUR BEST PRESENT CHANCE OF DEVELOPING A REALLY PRODUCTIVE ROLE FOR DEA IN RANGOON. I DO NOT BELIEVE BURMESE INTEREST IN THE DEA CONTACT WILL REMAIN NARROWLY FOCUSED ON THAI ASPECTS, PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE HELPFUL EXPOSURE TO DEA WHICH COLONEL AUNG HTAY ET AL RECEIVED IN THE COURSE OF THEIR RECENT VISIT TO THE U.S. ONCE A DEA ROLE HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED, AND ITS USEFULNESS HAD BEEN MADE APPARENT TO THE BURMESE, THE POSSIBILITY OF A PERMANENT DEA PRESENCE COULD OF COURSE BE REOPENED IF NECESSARY, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO PRESENT BASIS FOR CONFIDENCE THAT THE GUB CABINET POSITION AS STATED BY TIN OO WOULD BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

5. ACTION REQUESTED:

(A) IF YOU CONCUR, I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR ASCERTAINING DEA'S REACTION TO TIN OOWDS PROPOSAL;

(B) ASSUMING A FAVORABLE DEA REACTION, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD TRY TO SCHEDULE A VISIT BY A DEA REP IN THE LATTER PART OF OCTOBER (THE PYITHU HLUTTAW RESUMES SESSION IN MID-MONTH, AND WILL PREEMPT THE TIME OF MANY HIGH-LEVEL BURMESE OFFICIALS FOR A WEEK OR SO);

(C) IF WE PROCEED WITH THE TIN OO FORMULA, I HOPE THIS EMBASSY WILL BE CONSULTED FULLY IN REGARD TO SELECTION OF THESEA REPRESENTATIVE, AND I ASSUME I WILL HAVE FULL AUTHORITY OVER HIS ACTIVITIES WHILE IN BURMA.

(D) IN YOUR DISCRETION, PLEASE PASS BANGKOK.
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OSBORN

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